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ABSTRACT

Noting that early children's literature plays a major role in the development of children's attitudes, this annotated bibliography lists early children's literature which contains positive portrayals of older adults. The books selected portray aging as a natural and lifelong process of growing and developing; present similarities between young and old, as well as show young and old enjoying each other and learning from each other; and view older people as valuable and contributing members of society. Books that are highly recommended are indicated by stars, including Stan and Jan Berenstain's "A Week At Grandma's," Barbara Cooney's "Miss Rumphius," and Amy Hest's "The Crack-of-Dawn Walkers." Each annotation provides a brief summary of the story and the aging concept illustrated, and indicates grade level, publisher, and cost. The list does not include books that deal extensively with illness, disability, and death, since such topics are not necessarily synonymous with aging. (MM)

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# PROMOTING POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD AGING AMONG YOUNG CHILDREN THROUGH LITERATURE: A READING LIST (PRESCHOOL-THIRD GRADE)

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# PROMOTING POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD AGING THROUGH EARLY CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Sandra L. McGuire
1988

Early children's literature plays a major role in the development of children's attitudes. The elderly are often not mentioned in this literature, and when they are they are often portrayed in a negative, ageist manner. The following reading list includes early children's literature that contains positive portrayals of older adults. It portrays aging as a natural and lifelong process of growing and developing, similarities between young and old, young and old enjoying each other and learning from each other, and older people as valuable and contributing members of society. The list does not include books that deal extensively with illness, disability and death. These topics are not synonomous with aging and should not be the focus of aging education.

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Bang, Betsy (translator). (1978). THE OLD WOMAN AND THE RICE THIEF.
* New York: William Morrow. (PS-3: Picture Book) $11.88
"Every night a thief steals my rice," the old woman said, and off she went to seek help. With her quick wit, and the help of some friends, the old woman is able to outsmart the rice thief. Portrays the older woman as clever, quick-witted and intelligent.

Berenstain, Stan & Jan (1986). A WEEK AT GRANDMA'S. New York:
* Random House. (PS-2: Picture Book/First Time Books) $1.95
When brother and sister bear find out that they are going to spend a week with their grandparents they wonder what they will do. They end up having a wonderful time. This book can be used to help show children that older people can be very active and interesting.

Busquets, Carlos. AT THE MARKET. New York: Derrydale Books.
(PS-1: Picture Book) $1.95
This briefly narrated book details shopping at the market. At almost all of the shops there is an older adult working. The various roles and employment of the older adult can be used as a point of discussion with the children.

* Indicates a highly recommended book. Please note that all books should be reviewed by the parent or teacher for appropriateness prior to their use. If the reading level of a book is beyond that of the child the teacher or parent may wish to "talk through" the story.

This compilation is meant to be primarily a list of books-in-print on aging for young children. For out-of-print books please check with your local library. The prices listed are approximate.

Busquets, Carlos. A DAY ON THE FARM. New York: Derrydale Books. (PS-1: Picture Book) $1.95

This briefly narrated book illustrates a day on the farm. The children arise early to start the farm chores. Grandma is seen at lunch with the family and grandpa is shown sampling the first wine of the year. There is no dialogue for the older people, but they are incorporated into the life of the farm family.

Buss, Nancy (1986). HOW THINGS GROW. Racine, Wisconsin: Western
* Publishing (PS-3: Picture Book/Little Golden Book) $ .99

This book talks about plants, animals and people changing and growing. It provides an opportunity for children to take a look at growth and development throughout life in terms they can understand.

Caines, Jeanette (1980). WINDOW WISHING. New York: Harper and Row.
* (PS-3: Picture Book) $9.89

A sister and her brother spend a vacation with their fun and unconventional grandmother. Grandma Mag isn't ordinary. She wears sneakers and can make a kite and thinks the cemetery is the most peaceful place there is to have a picnic. A grandmother full of spunk and humor. Minority group representation of the elderly.

Cazet, Denys (1984). BIG SHOE, LITTLE SHOE. Scarsdale, New York: Bradbury Press. (PS-2: Picture Book) $12.95

Grandpa and little Louie change their roles as they change their shoes, much to their own amusement, but much to Grandma's consternation.

Cooney, Barbara (1982). MISS RUMPHIUS. New York: Puffin Books. (PS-3:
* Picture Book) $4.95

When Alice was a little girl she helped her grandfather who was an artist. She shared with her grandfather that when she grew up she wanted to go to do two things: go faraway places and live beside the sea. Her grandfather told her that there was a third thing that she must do: "You must do something to make the world more beautiful." When Alice grew up and became Miss Rumphius she lead an interesting life and readily accomplished the first two goals. How she accomplished the third makes the story interesting and heartwarming. At the end of the book Miss Rumphius is an older woman. She leaves the young reader with the same thought her grandfather had given her many years ago: "You must do something to make the world more beautiful." A loving, sensitive portrayal of the grandfather and of Miss Rumphius' life.

de Paola, Tomie (1975). STREGNA NONA. Englewood Cliffs: New Jersey.
(1-3: Picture Book) $13.95, $5.95 (pb)

Strega Nona meant "Grandma Witch." The grandma witch was very well respected by the townspeople and they came to her with their problems and troubles. She could cure headaches, get rid of warts, and she had a magic pasta pot. As she got older she looked for someone to help her with the house and garden and hired Big Anthony. Big Anthony gets into trouble with the magic pasta pot and it takes Strega Nona to get him out of trouble. **It should be mentioned to the child that older people can be very independent and are not always in need of help.**

de Paola, Tomie (1984). THE KID'S CAT BOOK. New York: Holiday House
* (PS-3: Picture Book) $5.95

Patrick goes to Granny Twinkle's for a free kitten and learns everything there is to know about cats--their different breeds, care, place in art, literature and history. Portrays the elderly in a positive manner. Shows the elderly woman as knowledgable. There is a lot of discussion about cats and younger children may not be willing to have the entire book read.

de Paola, Tomie (1978). PANCAKES FOR BREAKFAST. New York: Harcourt
* Brace. (PS-2: Picture Book) $5.95

An older woman's attempts to have pancakes for breakfast are hindered by a scarcity of supplies and the participation of her pets. There are no words to this story. The pictures are easy for young children to follow, and they enjoy helping to make up the story. It portrays the older woman as active, flexible and resourceful.

Douglass, Barbara (1982). GOOD AS NEW. New York: Lothrop, Lee, and
* Shepard. (PS-3: Picture Book) $11.88

Grady's Grandpa is known for his ability to fix just about anything. When a young cousin ruins Grady's prize teddy bear Grandpa does a wonderful job of fixing the it. He fixes it "better than new!" Portrays the grandfather as intelligent, creative, and sensitive to the needs of the child. Conveys a loving and posilive relationship between the boy and his grandfather.

Flora, James (1980). GRANDPA'S GHOST STORIES. New York: Antheneum (PS-3: Picture Book) $11.95, $3.95 (pb)

During a violent electrical storm a small boy sits on his grandfather's lap and listens to scary tales about a hungry skeleton, a horrible witch, big furry spiders, hideous ghosts and werewolves. The boy enjoys grandpa's stories.

Fulton, Janet (1969). WILD ANIMAL BABIES. Racine, Wisconsin: Western Publishing Company. (PS-1: Picture Book/Golden Shape Book) $ .99

This book can be used to illustrate one of the beginning concepts in aging education: aging is a natural and lifelong process of growing and developing. Children can be helped to see that babies grow into adults and older adults.

Goffstein, M. B. (1976). FISH FOR SUPPER. New York: Dial Press. (PS-2: Picture Book) $5.89

When grandmother went fishing she would get up at 5 a.m., make breakfast, and go down to the water to fish. She would fish all day,and then come home to fix her fish supper. Grandma is seen as being very capable and independent.

Goffstein, M. B. (1978). MY NOAH'S ARK. New York: Harper & Row (PS-2: Picture Book) $9.57

When she was a little girl her father made her a Noah's Ark carved from wood. Now a 90 year old woman fondly remembers a lifetime of pleasure that the Noah's Ark and its animals have given her. This book helps to illustrate how people can enjoy things throughout life.

Goldman, Susan (1976). GRANDMA IS SOMEBODY SPECIAL. Chicago: Albert * Whitman. (PS-3: Picture Book $9.25

A young girl enjoys visiting her grandmother in a tall apartment building in a big city. The grandmother shows a wide range of behaviors. She works, goes to school, buys cookies at the bakery, and does some very interesting things with her granddaughter. The special things that the two do together make this a very enjoyable and enlightening book.

Gomi, Taro (1985). COCO CAN'T WAIT. New York: Puffin Books.
* (PS-1: Picture Book) $3.95

Coco and grandmother want to see each other. Each goes off to visit the other and they each arrive at the other's home to find the other one gone. They finally meet each other half-way and eat apples together. On her way to meet Coco half-way grandmother rides a motorcycle. Grandmother is portrayed as very independent and capable.

Hayes, Sheila (1974). WHERE DID THE BABY GO? Racine, Wisconsin Western Publishing Company. (PS-2: Picture Book/Golden Book) $ .99

This book can be used to illustrate one of the beginning concepts in aging eduction: aging is a natural and lifelong process of growth and development. The child sees a baby picture of himself and begins to think about the process of growing up.

Harris, Robin (1982). HELLO KITTY SLEEPS OVER. New York: Random House (PS-1: Picture Book) $3.50

Kitty sleeps over with her grandparents. Her grandparents help her to get through the nights separation from her parents. There are toys for her, a special dinner, and stories to read. Her hand being held by grandma as she falls asleep is very special. Many children are already familiar with Hello Kitty and would enjoy this book.

Hest, Amy (1984). THE CRACK-OF-DAWN WALKERS. New York: MacMillan.
* (PS-3: Picture Book) $12.95

Sadie and her brother take turns going with their grandfather on Sunday for special early morning walks together. Sadie tells the story of these walks. She delights in this time together with her grandfather. On their walks they talk about the "old country", stop at a bake shop and sip cocoa. Later, as others rise from their beds they notice the two very different size sets of tracks left by the "crack-of-dawn" walkers. Enjoyable text that is well received by children.

Hooker, Ruth (1986). AT GRANDMA AND GRANDPA'S HOUSE. Middleton:
* Connecticut: Weekly Reader Books. (PS-1: Picture Book) $1.95

Describes an enjoyable visit of two children and their parents to the children's grandparents house.

Hurd, Edith T. (1982). I DANCE IN MY RED PAJAMAS. New York: Harper &
* Row. (PS-3: Picture Book) $10.89

When Jenny goes to visit her grandparents she is warned by her parents not to make too much noise because grandma and grandpa want peace, quiet and tranquility. However, Jenny knows better. She knows that they are not quiet and very active. No one is better at jumping and stomping than Grandpa--especially when he dances with Jenny in her red pajamas. Grandma is a wonderful cook and knows more about cats than anyone. She and her grandparents play games, and when Grandpa tucks her into bed he tells Jenny: "Oh what a beautiful, lovely, noisy day." Jenny loves her visits with her grandparents. Older people are portrayed as active, interesting, and vibrant.

Kantrowitz, Mildred (1970). MAXIE. New York: Parents Magazine Press.
(PS-3: Picture Book) $8.95

An elderly lady named Maxie who follows the same routine every day until one day she feels so lonely and unneeded that she stays in bed. When the neighborhood people come to her door to see what is wrong, she realizes how many people need her and count on her after all. Some of the feelings that Maxie had may be similar to ones the children have had. This story could lead into a discussion of similarities between young and old as well as discussions of the value of the elderly.

Kennel, Moritz (1960). OLD MACDONALD HAD A FARM. Racine, Wisconsin:
* Western Publishing Company (PS-2: Picture Book/Golden Book) $ .99

This familiar song shows an older farmer who has a very busy, productive life. Most children are familiar with the song and readily relate to it.

Kenworthy, Catherine (1982). A VISIT FROM GRANDMA AND GRANDPA.
* Racine, Wisconsin: Western Publishing (PS-2: Picture Book/Golden Book) $ .99

When her parents go on a vacation Margaret is taken care of by her grandparents. They do many special things together. Grandpa plays the harmonica, they go shopping, rake leaves, visit the part, go to the movies and entertain Margaret's friends. Margaret enjoys her visit with her grandparents.

Kesselman, Wendy Ann (1980). EMMA. New York: Doubleday.
* (PS-3: Picture Book) $10.95, $4.95 (pb)
Motivated by a birthday gift a 72 year old woman begins to paint. This delightful book illustrates the creativity of the elderly.

Klein, Leonore (1983). OLD, OLDEST, OLDEST. New York: Hastings. (PS-3) $9.95
This book discusses how people and animals age and grow. When using it with younger children the discussion of animal lifespan may be too complicated, and the reader may want to stay more directly with the sections on human growth and development.

Knox-Wagner, Elaine (1981). MY GRANDPA RETIRED TODAY. Racine, Wisconsin: Albert Whitman. (1-3: Picture Book) $10.75.
As Margey helps her grandfather clean and lock up his barber shop for the last time she feels the pain of separation that comes with retirement almost as much as he does. She helps grandfather to see the positive aspects of retirement--like more time for them together. Although this book does not portray retirement in a very positive way, it does open up the topic of retirement and the need for retirement planning.

Kroll, Steven (1983). TOOT! TOOT! New York: Holiday House. (PS-1: Picture Book) $12.95
While playing with his toy train set Lawrence imagines he is going on a visit to his grandparents house.

Kroll, Steven (1979). IF I COULD BE MY GRANDMOTHER. New York: Pantheon. (PS-2: Picture Book) $5.99
A young girl acts out the things her grandmother does that she likes. Unfortunately the behaviors are rather age-stereotypic. However, the relationship between the granddaughter and grandmother is seen as a postive and loving one.

Kunhardt, Edith (1985). GRANDMA AND GRANDPA SMITH. Racine, Wisconsin:
* Western Publishing. (PS-2: Picture Book/Golden Book) $ .99

Sam and Sally Smith lived with their parents in a big apartment building in the city. Every summer it was a special treat to visit their grandparents in the country. Although Grandma and Grandpa are home all day they are very busy. They tend a garden, do carpentry work, go shopping, share memories and play with the children. The children especially like visiting the attic where they can see things like their father's old baseball glove and a locket with a picture of Grandma when she was a girl.

Lasky, Kathryn (1976). I HAVE FOUR NAMES FOR MY GRANDFATHER.
* Boston: Little, Brown. (PS-3: Picture Book) $11.95

A young boy describes his close relationship with his grandfather who he calls: Poppy, Pop, Grandpa, and Pops. This is a heartwarming story of a loving and sharing relationship between grandparent and grandchild. The book has beautiful pictures of the boy and his grandfather. When the boy and his grandfather are fishing the topic of death is briefly alluded to. For younger children this section can be deleted or reworded; and should not be focused on.

Lasky, Kathryn (1979). MY ISLAND GRANDMA. New York: Frederick Warne.
(1-3: Picture Book) $7.95

Abbey spends the summer on an island where her grandmother has a home. Everyday Abbey runs barefoot over the path from her parents home to her grandmothers. With grandmother she has a new adventure everyday. Sometimes they go swimming, have talks, pick blueberries, tell cloud stories, make moss gardens or bake cookies. They enjoy nature together. At the end of the summer Abbey and her parents return to the city and she has many wonderful memories of her island grandma. Illustrates the friendship, companionship, sharing and similarities that young and old have.

Locker, T. (1984). WHERE THE RIVER BEGINS. New York: Dial Books (K-3)
$15.00

Two young boys and their grandfather go on a camping trip to find the source of the river that flows by their home.

Lucas, George (1985). STAR WARS. New York: Random House. (PS-3:
* Picture Book) $5.95

Children are often familiar with the Star Wars saga. Although the book is wordy, and the dialogue may not keep the interest of the younger children, the story can be told through the pictures. One of the heroes is an older man named Obi-Wan Kenobi. Obi-Wan is portrayed as a person of great integrity--a role model who is sensitive, intelligent, loyal, and resourceful. Children generally like, enjoy and relate to Obi-Wan. The story portrays an older person as an honored, valuable and contributing member of society.

Mathieu, Joe (1979). THE OLDEN DAYS. New York: Random House. (1-3:
* Picture Book/Please Read to Me) $1.95

This book serves as a source of history and integrates older people into the pictures. When reading this book to the children you can point out the older blacksmith, carpenter, weaver, medicine maker, and teacher. It also helps to give children a sense of history, of which older people are a part.

Mayer, Mercer (1983). JUST GRANDMA AND ME. Racine, Wisconsin:
* Western Publishing. (PS-1: Picture Book/Golden Look-Look Book) $1.50.

A story of a grandma animal and her grandson and a day at the beach. They do a lot of fun things together.

Mayer, Mercer (1983). WHEN I GET BIGGER. Racine, Wisconsin: Western
* Publishing. (PS-1: Picture Book/Golden Look-Look Book) $1.50

A look at growing up on an level that young children can understand. Open to a lot of discussion about growing throughout life--growing from children to adults to older adults. Let's the children look at some of the things that they would like to do when they are older.

Miles, Miska (1971). ANNIE AND THE OLD ONE. Boston: Little Brown.
(1-3: Picture Book) $12.45

This is a story of a young Navajo girl living in a hogan on a reservation with her parents and her grandmother.

Olson, Arielle North (1984). HURRY HOME GRANDMA! New York: Dutton
* (PS-3: Picture Book) $9.95
Timothy and Melinda anxiously anticipate their explorer grandmoter's arrival for Christmas as she rushes through various adventures to make it home in time.

Oxenbury, Helen (1984). GRANDMA AND GRANDPA. New York: Dial Books.
* (PS-3: Picture Book) $3.95
A small girl tells about all the good times that she has during her weekly visits to her grandparents house. Illustrates a warm and living relationship between grandparents and grandchildren.

Oxenbury, Helen (1981). FAMILY. New York: Wanderer Books. (PS-1: Picture Book) $3.50
A one picture/one word per page book that looks at members of the family. The family members include grandmother and grandfather. This book can be used to begin a discussion of older people.

Parish, Peggy (1969). GRANNY AND THE INDIANS. New York: Macmillan. (1-3: Picture Book) $2.25
Granny Guntry proves such a menace to the Indians that they promise to bring her food everyday if she will just stay out of their forest. Granny lives alone in the woods and provides for herself.

Pfloog, Jan (1968). ANIMALS ON THE FARM. Racine, Wisconsin: Western Publishing Company. (PS-1: Picture Book/Golden Book) $ .99
This book helps children to understand a beginning concept in aging education: aging is a natural and lifelong process of growing and developing. The book consists entirely of brief narrative accompanied by pictures of animal adults and their young. A discussion of how people grow and develop is an appropriate topic to accompany this book.

Pomerantz, Charlotte (1982). BUFFY AND ALBERT. New York: Greenwillow.
(1-3: Picture Book) $8.88

Grandfather is portrayed as an active and intelligent person. The story talks extensively about grandfather's cats (Buffy and Albert) who are getting to be quite old, grandpa's three children--one of which is the children's father, and his grandchildren. Grandpa "remembers" when he was younger. He compares earlier family times to now. He tells the children how now the house is quiet, and he likes that--it gives him time to read and carve things out of wood. Grandpa twists an ankle and must stay off it for a while. The children and grandchildren take turns taking care of grandpa with his twisted ankle and enjoy it. After a week of recovery grandpa was back to being independent. A multidimensional story of an older person and his family.

Pryor, Bonnie (1985). GRANDPA BEAR. New York: Morrow.
(PS-1: Picture Book) $11.88

Four episodes demonstrate the imaginative games Grandpa Bear plays with Samantha and the affection between them.

Raynor, Dorka (1977). GRANDPARENTS AROUND THE WORLD. Chicago:
Albert Whitman. (K-3: Picture Book) $9.75
A picture book of grandparents around the world.

Rylant, Cynthia (1982). WHEN I WAS YOUNG IN THE MOUNTAINS. New York:
* Dutton. (PS-3: Picture Book) $3.95.

Reminiscence of the pleasures of life in the Appalachian mountains as a child. There are many references to grandparents in the book, older people are seen in a variety of roles and are integrated into family and community life. An enjoyable book to read.

Rylant, Cynthia. (1985). THE RELATIVES CAME. Bradbury Press.
(K-3: Picture Book) $12.95

The relatives come to visit from Virginia, and have a wonderful time. Illustrates family relationships and allows discussion of generations.

Sleator, William (1981). THE ANGRY MOON. Boston: Little, Brown.
(K-3: Picture Book) $4.95
This is a legend of an Alaskan Indian boy who, assisted by his grandmother's magic, rescues an Indian girl being held prisoner by the angry moon because the girl had laughed at the moon's ugly face.

Streich, Corrine (1984). GRANDPARENTS HOUSES: POEMS ABOUT GRANDPARENTS. New York: Greenwillow. (K-3) $11.47
Poems from many countries and nationalities about grandparents.

Williams, Barbara (1975). KEVIN'S GRANDMOTHER. New York: Dutton.
* (PS-6: Picture Book) $9.25, $3.95 (pb)
Kevin and his friend talk about their grandmothers. Kevin's grandmother is very unconventional. She likes MAD magazine, rides a Honda 50, arm wrestles, practices yoga, practices judo, belongs to mountain-climbing/scuba diving/karate clubs, fixes her own roof, goes skydiving, takes her grandchildren on trips, and makes peanut butter soup. His friend's grandmother gives piano lessons, plays checkers with him, takes him to the ice cream parlor, belongs to bridge/garden/music clubs, keeps interesting scrapbooks, takes her grandchildren on trips, and volunteers her time. Both grandmothers are portrayed as active and interesting and as having positive, loving relationships with their grandchildren.

Williams, Vera (1982). A CHAIR FOR MY MOTHER. New York: Greenwillow.
(K-3: Picture Book) $3.95
A little girl, her mother, and grandmother saved dimes to buy a comfortable armchair after all their furniture was lost in a fire. This is a story of three generations living and doing together, although the role of the grandmother is not fully developed.

Wolf, Janet (1984). THE BEST PRESENT IS ME. New York: Harper and Row.
(PS-3: Picture Book) $10.89
A small girl travels to New York with her parents to celebrate her grandmother's birthday but along the way loses the present she had made.

Zolotow, Charlotte (1972). WILLIAMS DOLL. New York: Harper and Row.
* (PS-3: Picture Book) $10.89, $3.80(pb)

William wanted a doll. His father gave him a basketball and a train set instead, but these things did not make William want a doll any less. Grandmother does not think that boys with dolls are sissies. She gets him a doll so that when he grows up he will know how to be a good father. Grandmother shows sensitivity, wisdom and understanding.

Zolotow, Charlotte (1984). I KNOW A LADY. New York: Puffin.
* (PS-3: Picture Book) $3.95

Hopefully most children would know an older person like the one in this book. Whenever you see her she is either working in her garden, giving out candy apples at Halloween, or just waving to you. She always makes you feel special. She is someone you will always remember and love. Excellent text and enjoyable reading.